# Executive Proclamation

## State of South Dakota
## Office of the Governor

***Whereas***, Marriage is the unique cornerstone and foundation of society. Religious and civil laws have granted marriage special recognition, benefits, responsibilities, and protections since the beginning of recorded history; and,

***Whereas***, The family is an essential part of American culture. It is impossible to deny the tremendous contributions responsible men and women have made in committing to each other to marry, to raise a family, and to teach their children the value of human life, love of God and their fellow man, morality, good citizenship, and responsible behavior; and,

***Whereas***, Marriage has been proven to have numerous benefits for both men and women such as a better emotional health, longer life spans, greater wealth and less domestic violence. The benefits of marriage extend into society in the form of lower rates of abortion, child abuse, drug abuse, crime, poverty, welfare dependency, and health care costs; and,

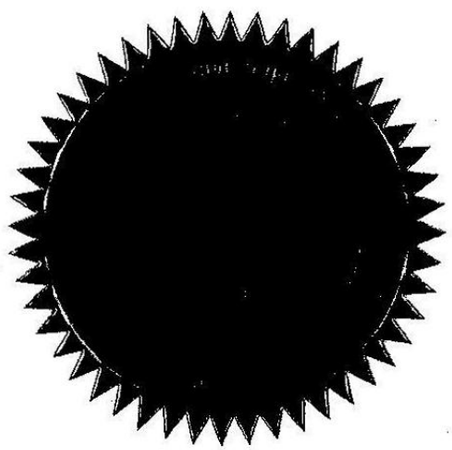
***Whereas***, In recent times, the venerated institution for marriage between one man and one woman has come under assault. The prevalence of divorce, cohabitation, and the attacks upon traditional marriage threaten the very core of our society. Depriving children of the love and nurture of both a mother and a father results in higher rates of depression, failure in school, premarital sex, teenage pregnancy, cohabitation, and negative attitudes toward marriage. The harms to children in particular and society in general are long-lasting and overwhelming; and,

***Whereas***, Throughout our history, marriage has played an important role in promoting the values that have helped make this nation great, it is highly appropriate at this time to honor the institution of marriage as essential to the continued well-being of the United States:

***Now, Therefore, I, M. Michael Rounds,*** Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim October 12-18, 2003, as

## MARRIAGE PROTECTION WEEK

in South Dakota, and I encourage all citizens of South Dakota to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities that honor traditional marriage and its essential benefits to society.



***In Witness Whereof***, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Ninth Day of October in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Three.

M. Michael Rounds, Governor

**Attest:**

Chris Nelson, Secretary of State